



Cumbria Strategic Flood Partnership
Report from a strategy workshop

16 December 2019

The Cumbria Strategic Flood Partnership hosted this strategy workshop, inviting wider stakeholders as well as its own members to contribute to the Partnership's new strategy. The workshop was designed by a multi-stakeholder task group of:

Richard Denyer, Independent Chair
John Kelsall, CRAGG
Doug Coyle, Cumbria County Council
Carolyn Otley, Cumbria Council for Voluntary Service
Stewart Mounsey, Environment Agency
Kate Luxton, Environment Agency
Anthony Lane, CSFP Coordinator

The Task Group was assisted by independent third party 3KQ in the designing, facilitating and reporting of the workshop. The choice of agenda and format was informed by various factors but in particular the long-term strategic intent to have a flood strategy for Cumbria, and the need to celebrate the contribution of diverse thinking if the strategy is to be robust and widely supported.

This report was compiled by 3KQ as the independent workshop managers, based on the open notes taken in the workshop on flipchart, which participants were invited to comment on and alter for accuracy throughout the event. In order to promote open discussion and frank exchange, it was agreed at the start that the record and report would be anonymised, except where it was clearly useful to capture who said what, for example when somebody was offering help or accepting an action.

Although the report has been checked by the task group, the accuracy and balance of the report is the responsibility of 3KQ as independent workshop managers, aiming to communicate a useful, accurate and balanced reflection of discussions on the day. The full transcript of the workstation flipcharts is available on request (CSFP@cumbria.gov.uk). It is 17 pages long so not appended to this workshop report.

More information can be found about the workshop facilitation at www.3kq.co.uk

Venue: **Rheded Conference Centre, Penrith.**



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1. Introduction

This is a report of the Cumbria Strategic Flood Partnership's Strategy Workshop that took place on Monday 16th December 2019 at Rheged, Penrith. The report is a summary of the meeting to be used by: those in attendance as an aide-memoire; those absent to update themselves on proceedings; and for the Strategy Task Group who are tasked with writing a draft strategy informed by the day's contributions as presented here.

The meeting was independently facilitated by 3KQ.

Welcome from the independent chair, Richard Denyer

Ladies & gentlemen, on behalf of the Cumbria Strategic flood Partnership and especially of its recently created Strategy Task Group, let me bid you a very warm welcome to today's important event, a workshop to provide guidance on a new strategy. We have used the word workshop deliberately, because we really do want your inspirational and frank inputs.

Today is the 246th anniversary of the Boston Tea Party that within 3 years had led to the formation of the United States. At the risk of being accused of harbouring delusions of grandeur, we are looking for big results from today too. In the hope that you have left your tomahawks at home, we are being assisted today and in preparations for it by the local enterprise 3KQ, who have much experience of stimulating the generation and capture of ideas in such situations without the tea ending up in Morecambe Bay. Although none of us want to stifle frank feedback on the past, it is of the greatest importance to Cumbria that wherever possible criticisms are outweighed by, or converted into, positive and constructive ideas about what should happen in the future. And not just in the realm of short term practicalities constrained by austerity or whatever might replace it, and current regulations, but as much in blue-sky terms of 'what could be'.

In a report 6 months ago by the Rockefeller Foundation, partly prompted by the fact that 734 million people globally had been affected by floods in the previous decade, their research showed that the most successful partnership engagements define and articulate their challenge and objective; ensure clear scope of work and defined expectations; prepare carefully; leverage local knowledge; and promote cross-departmental /-organisational collaboration. But even the best-laid plans required partners who were flexible and patient with timelines.

Two of the Strategy Task Group or STG members will be unpacking some of our current tentative ideas shortly, but I should also acknowledge that, alongside 3KQ colleagues and me, members of this Group are John Kelsall (CRAGG), Carolyn Otley (Cumbria CVS), Doug Coyle and Anthony Lane (Cumbria County Council) and Kate Luxton and Stewart Mounsey (Environment Agency).

When the Moors arrived in Spain from North Africa in 8th/9th centuries, they asked communities throughout Andalucía what their greatest wish was. Along with peace, the great majority answered water management. As a result, a system of practical community committees was almost immediately established, and believe it or not they are mostly still

operating over 1000 years later. When the Normans arrived in England 200 years later, they thought they knew all the answers to everything, and certainly didn't want community input. For this and other reasons, Britain has never taken flood planning very seriously.

Looking at recent events in Yorkshire & Derbyshire, and before that in Somerset and Lincolnshire and Cheshire, it is abundantly clear that Cumbria is streets (or estuaries) ahead in many respects, and especially in terms of taking first-mover steps in community involvement. Before I am heckled by some of the community representatives here, let me acknowledge that there is still a long way to go. But in my opinion, based on 38 years of living next to an upland watercourse in Cumbria, and an intensive induction programme of visits and meetings in my first few weeks in office, I believe a massive vote of thanks is due to Partners from communities and authorities and agencies of all kinds, not least for having the courage to appoint me as a wholly independent chair. Having been Chief Executive of 5 civil society organisations, and a Non-Exec or Trustee or Chair of a dozen more, I have some experience of bringing together folk from different nationalities and professions and sectors to collaborate, based on emphasis on the things that unite as opposed to those that divide. Many of these have involved the life & work of Cumbria & its neighbours. For example, I was on the government's Advisory Committee for Forests & Woodland for NW England for 10 years. It is only when you are leaving such roles that you find out what the members and stakeholders really think. As I was about to step down from one post, at a meeting of one of our Asian branches, the national chair said in his speech "when Mr Denyer arrived the organisation was on the edge of a precipice". A few seconds later he said with a flourish, "since then we've taken a giant step forward".

Like other members of STG, for today I am mostly going to be in listening mode, because we really do want to be sure that we have understood your many and various points of view. I will only intervene if things get out of hand, so I will now hand over to the master of the 3 Key Questions technique, Rhuari Bennett.

Meeting orientation

Rhuari Bennett as facilitator reminded participants of the purpose, ran through the planned agenda, and proposed some working agreements so the meeting was productive.

The purpose of the day was for Partnership members and wider stakeholders with an interest in Cumbria-wide flood risk reduction to provide guidance to the CSFP strategy process. Specific aims for the day included:

- **To build understanding** of stakeholders' aspirations for a strategy and what it should strive towards.
- **To contribute to elements** of the emerging strategy, including priority action areas and potential improvements to how the CSFP works.
- **To provide guidance and momentum** to the process of strategy development, in order to maximise chances of successful drafting, endorsement and delivery.

The workshop ran from 10:00 to 16:00 and the agenda covered the following:

- Introductions and orientation
- Presentation: how have we got here, and what might be included in a strategy
- Mission and objectives for the next 5-10 years
- Culture and organisation of the CSFP
- Priority actions: sharing information, coordinating activity, jointly delivering
- Your involvement and wider engagement

2. Presentation: how we got here, what might be in a Strategy

CSFP: How we got here

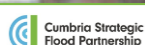
John Kelsall

Board member for Eden Catchment Community

Chair of Carlisle Flood Action Group
CRAGG committee member
And Strategy Task Group member



Strategy workshop: December 2019



Strategy workshop: December 2019



In 2015 the memories
of 2005 and 2009
were still very vivid



Strategy workshop: December 2019

There was
anger and
public concern



Strategy workshop: December 2019

The Cumbria Floods Partnership consisted of the principal Risk Management Authorities - EA, LLFA, UU, Network Rail and Highways England etc.

Post "Desmond" this was encouraged to expand by Rory Stewart, then Floods Minister, to include Natural England, National Parks, Rivers Trusts and community groups etc. which became the CSFP.

Business, Health and Education sectors have been independently active so this is an ideal opportunity to include what they have been doing.



Strategy workshop: December 2019

We talk...

We have also argued, reasoned, cajoled, tested, explored and even reached positions of agreement!

Partners have shared considerable amounts of data and advice and contributed to workshop session topics including:

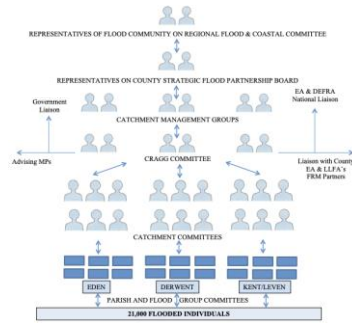
- Knowledge sharing and gaps
- Future of flood risk
- Surface Water Flooding
- CSFP Review – SWOT

A clear strategy is yet to emerge although there is a much clearer understanding of the Flood Risk Management tools available, where we want to be and each of the partners capabilities.



Strategy workshop: December 2019

Central to the Partnership was the inclusion and participation of the community with, perhaps, 52 separate flood action groups to represent. This was not straight forward particularly with issues of data protection.



Revising the structure and operation?

"It's a talking shop with no clear outcomes"
 "It is populated mostly by public authorities who don't experience the real world"
 "Communities do not appreciate how difficult it is to get the necessary consents"
 "Attendees do not often have authority to commit their member partners"
 "It's unclear what the expectation is of members, and many don't turn up regularly"
 "It has no funding so how can it lead by example?"
 "Businesses and other sectors could help but are not represented"

Improve structure & operation

- Clarify membership and roles
- Improve continuity of membership and learning
- Harness knowledge and expertise
- Share information better
- Receive funding directly as a body
- Raise profile with funders
- Set up sub-groups to accelerate work and widen inclusion

See workstation:
we want your input

We are all connected - brought together by a common goal to reduce flooding – are these connections going to become a big immovable knot or a coordinated process where partners keep to a plan for common good?

We need a strategy



Timeline for developing the strategy

We need a Strategy so that everything each Partner does moves us toward a maximum level of risk reduction



A new strategy

Stewart Mounsey

Environment Agency and
Strategy Task Group Member



Strategy workshop: December 2019

"Vision without action is just a dream, action without vision just passes the time, and vision with action can change the world."

Nelson Mandela



Strategy workshop: December 2019

CSFP draft mission (what we do)

**Working together to reduce
flood risk and its impacts on
people, communities and
livelihoods in Cumbria**



Strategy workshop: December 2019

Our principles (draft)

In making choices we will:

- Seek to understand the source and impact of flooding risks.
- Focus our efforts to those who face the greatest risk.
- Learn from the past and use a wide range of evidence.
- Co-ordinate our action through a strategic plan.
- Focus on the CSFP strategic plan.
- Enable delivery of the plan across a variety of scales.
- Prepare for climate change scenarios in our choices.
- Seek to improve human, social, natural, physical and financial capital.



Strategy workshop: December 2019

Our culture: how we do things (draft)

Inclusion and respect - the partnership will be inclusive and respect the range of views within it and seek to find common ground.

Take a strategic overview – improve what we know about flooding across Cumbria and take a strategic overview of plans and actions to manage them.

Evolution and learning – using learning from previous flooding and the best new information available to work with partners to identify traditional and innovative solutions.

Collaborative working and decision making – working together to share information and co-ordinate funding / resources to best protect lives and livelihoods.

Represent Cumbria - seeking to influence policies or developments that impinge on flood risk.

Deliver wider benefit – striving to ensure that actions to reduce flood risk deliver wider benefits for people, economy and the environment.



Strategy workshop: December 2019

Objectives of the strategy (draft)


1. To **better protect** people, wellbeing and livelihoods from flooding in future decades.
2. To **provide direction**, focus and clarity to CSFP's operations and development over next 5-10 years.
3. To **communicate** CSFP's aims, how it operates and how it can contribute to better understanding of flood risk.
4. To provide a constructive and flexible framework for **sharing information and ideas**.
5. To ensure the **planning of partner work programmes is aligned** so that effectiveness of existing investment is maximised.
6. To present and pursue a coherent **programme of delivery** that enables new and existing funding sources to be accessed more effectively.



Strategy workshop: December 2019

Input from you today

- Mission and objectives
- Culture
- Partnership structure and operation
- Action area: sharing information, ideas and views
- Action area: coordinating our activity
- Action area: jointly delivering
- Engagement: offers of help, engaging wider

 Cumbria Strategic Flood Partnership

Strategy workshop: December 2019

Mission & objectives

Around your tables:

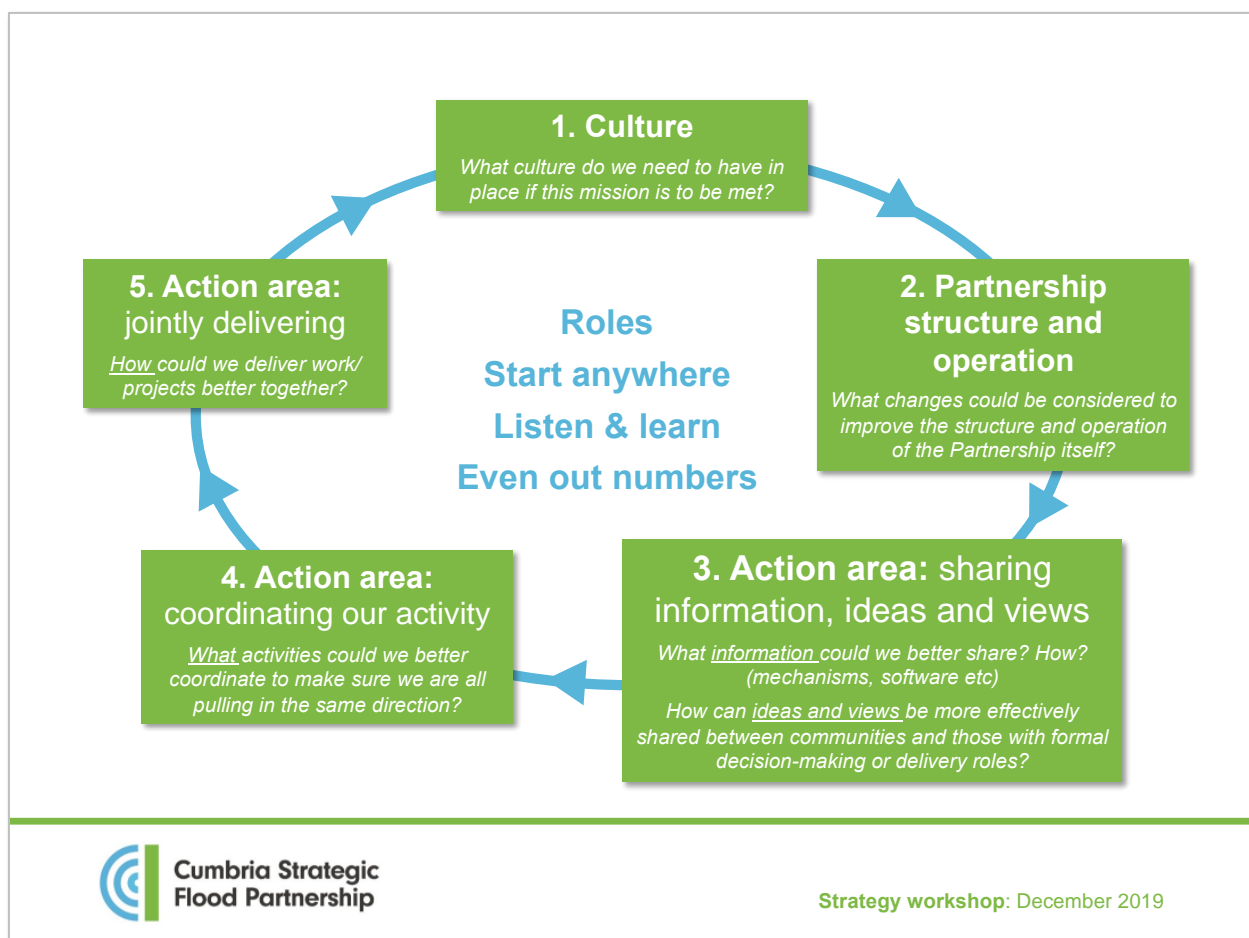
- 1. Draft mission:** How well does the draft mission reflect the common ground between us for the next 5-10 years?
- 2. Draft objectives:** Are the objectives for the strategy the right ones? Improvements or gaps?

If you have time:

- 3. What will either enable or block progress towards these?**

 Cumbria Strategic Flood Partnership

Strategy workshop: December 2019



After the presentation slides, a participant asked where in the agenda it would be possible to explore the interface between flood risk reduction and response/recovery, as the Partnership had grappled with this in the past. Rhuari clarified that this issue could arise across the agenda, in particular three of the five workstation discussions anticipated later in the day that focussed on actions to collaborate better.

3. Mission statement (draft)

“Working together to reduce flood risk and its impacts on people, communities and livelihoods in Cumbria”

Participants discussed the draft mission statement presented by the Strategy Task Group, specifically addressing the question **“How well does the draft mission statement reflect the common ground between us for the next 5-10 years?”** Comments regarding the mission statement from the 10 tables covered the following themes.

It’s about right. Many of the tables thought the mission statement was ‘about right’ or similar. They liked it because it was nice and short, and that it was comprehensive in that it covered the source of water, impacts, communities, infrastructure, and livelihoods.

General feel/tone. Even where people agreed with the overall mission, a variety of suggestions were made to ‘make the vision less woolly’, ‘be more positive and ambitious’ and also add in a sense of ‘significant [risk reduction]’ or ‘...as a priority’, in order to give the mission some ambition and drive.

Focus on flood risk reduction. The absence of the word resilience was highlighted by some people, suggesting that it needs to be included to ensure its covered. However, other people felt that this implies a failure of risk reduction so shouldn’t be relied on. The words ‘response’ and ‘delivery’ are also absent, which might imply a narrow remit or lack of integration to other important work. One group suggested that ‘reducing’ risk wasn’t necessarily the right phrase given climate change, and perhaps ‘managing’ risk was more appropriate.

Timescale, strategy vs action. The timescale needs clarifying, as the terminology at the moment is vague and inconsistent (5-10yrs, decades). There was also a strong sense that although a strategy in the long term was a good idea, it risks abandoning the sense of urgency for action now.

Focus on people/environment. Several tables highlighted the lack of mention of environment (habitats/trees/ecology) and the apparent absence of businesses or the economy, whilst ‘people’ were potentially duplicated by mentioning both ‘people’ and ‘communities’. This view was not held by everyone however. It was clear from discussions that many participants infer great importance from either the inclusion or exclusion of specific individual words in the mission statement.

Cumbria focus. Where geography was mentioned, there were two views. On the one hand, the Cumbria-focus was understandable. On the other, participants highlighted that major infrastructure (M6, West Coast Mainline, water exports) exists at the edge of Cumbria which makes the work strategically important for UK.

Deliverability. Whilst people may agree with the sentiment of the mission statement, there was doubt in some quarters as to whether it could be delivered, in particular if the Partnership is not a funded body, with no statutory requirement for partners to work together. Funding is required to generate and maintain momentum. There was cynicism from some as to whether the stated 'working together' happens currently regarding the community: for some, too often it feels like information and suggestions are passed on and ignored by decision-makers.

Other suggestions. Various other suggestions and comments were raised:

- Shame the missions statement doesn't mention wellbeing, it's neglected.
- Mission statement could equally apply to other flood-related groups: what is the unique selling point for this group?
- Need clarity on what this group does.
- Should not the priority be on small communities that don't qualify for government funding?
- Hoped this would be a lobbying group for Cumbria.
- Need a glossary with the strategy document, with different meanings set out.

4. Objectives of strategy (draft)

Objective 1: To better protect people, wellbeing and livelihoods from flooding in future decades.

Objective 2: To provide direction, focus and clarity to CSFP's operations and development over next 5-10 years.

Objective 3: To communicate CSFP's aims, how it operates and how it can contribute to better understanding of flood risk.

Objective 4: To provide a constructive and flexible framework for sharing information and ideas.

Objective 5: To ensure the planning of partner work programmes is aligned so that effectiveness of existing investment is maximised.

Objective 6: To present and pursue a coherent programme of delivery that enables new and existing funding sources to be accessed more effectively.

The six draft objectives for the strategy (above) were discussed in tandem with the mission statement, addressing the question *“Are the draft objectives the right ones? Are there any improvements or gaps?”* Views across the tables can be summarised as follows.

Overall tone. A wide range of comments about the overall feel of the objectives, including:

- Need more focus on action and the strategy's focus on enabling it, not process.
- They feel too vague and not action-led.
- Objectives feel too traditional: don't move us on from where we are now.
- Objectives need to be made SMART, including the 'how to' not just the 'what'.
- They are about right. A couple could be expanded.
- Need to avoid conflict with existing strategies.
- Not clear whose these objectives are: some are about CSFP and some are about individual organisations. Needs to be clearer.

Gaps. A range of suggestions for new objectives (or elements to include) were made to add:

- Streamlining processes, to reduce the bureaucracy.
- The full range of measures such as reservoirs and lakes as ways to reduce flood risk.
- An outward-looking focus: is inward at the moment, quite insular.
- Reference to environmental benefits and impacts. This was in contrast to other comments saying people should be prioritised over nature.
- Interactions with other groups.

- Funding: better prioritising how and where money is spent across catchments. Securing funding for small communities.
- Making communities part of the decision-making process, listening to them.
- Lobbying Parliament for new legislation, for example for 'reservoir management'.
- Climate change: no specific reference to this at the moment, too big to omit.
- Linking in with other delivery plans e.g. drainage and sewerage plans.
- Education: some people don't understand if they've not been flooded.

Objective 1. Discussion about this objective covered:

- It's OK as long as 'protect' fully covers everything including resilience.
- No reference to resilience. Could it be 'better protect and increase resilience'? It is acknowledged though that reference to resilience is sensitive for some.
- Replace 'better protect' with 'actively reduce flood risk'. The addition of 'reduce' risk is important.
- Should emphasise wellbeing, a serious and neglected issue.
- Focus on 'empowering/enabling people to protect themselves' rather than 'protect'.
- Is managed coastal retreat included with protect? What kind of flooding is covered?
- Should livelihoods be businesses instead?
- This objective repeats the mission statement and doesn't add anything.

Objective 2. Discussion about this objective centred on the issue of timescales:

- Need to be made consistent and specific: currently mentions 5-10 years and 'decades': which is it?
- 5-10 year timescale implies that nothing might happen in years 1-5.
- The other objectives need timescales too.
- A longer timescale was needed, up to 50 years.

And lastly, the point was made that the wording suggests that the strategy will only direct 'CSFP operations' and not the activities of the wider partner organisations involved.

Objective 3. Discussion about this objective covered:

- Should widen to include communication on:
 - What causes flooding.
 - What action is happening and will happen.
 - Why work can and can't happen.
 - How programmes have been aligned between partners.
 - Results of work.

- Whether areas flooded again.
- Add “contribute to better understanding and management of flood risk”.
- Need to be clear about the audience for communication, as well as reflect the experience of the audience, for example those who have been flooded.

Objective 4. This objective was discussed only briefly, and where it was covered it was supported: bring people and groups together to share action and ideas is positive.

Objective 5. Discussion about this objective was brief and covered:

- Focussing on ‘alignment’ and reassuring the public that action is coordinated.
- Making it stronger: the objective is quite weak.

Objective 6. Discussion about this objective was brief and covered:

- Add the words “to develop a programme of delivery, subject to funding”.
- Making it stronger: the objective is quite weak.
- Not sure shared delivery is right: who specifically owns the objectives and therefore responsibility for delivering them – everyone on CSFP?

Wider discussion ranged across all the objectives, or queries about their implementation. Some people were content with both the mission statement and objectives, but very concerned about how it would all be delivered.

Funding. A repeated assertion that these objectives won’t deliver themselves, they’ll need resource to deliver. Additionally:

- It’s not ideal that EA and CCC staff have to do this alongside their normal role.
- Needs to be more than the existing roles to deliver more.
- If more funding is not found, it’s possible that the CSFP will actually dilute the existing funding available for the delivery bodies.
- Does the officer time provided by partners need formalising?
- The nature of the CSFP will change if it receives funding.
- Get better at prioritising funding: why still planting trees as part of this work?

Scepticism and focus on action. Some were sceptical about the efficacy of ‘another strategy’ and highlighted that partners will need to focus great efforts on short-term action, as well as bringing the communities along with them, if they are to be brought on board.

Responsibility for delivery. Need to be careful that it is clear where responsibility for delivery lies, and that ambiguity or overlap isn’t unduly created between the CSFP and the main delivery partners.

Other points made included:

- How does the CSFP link with other groups that deal with resilience?
- The constant churn of Partnership members makes it difficult for communities to keep in touch and up to date.
- Ensure that whatever is delivered in terms of reducing flood risk doesn't make things worse for someone else.
- Need to influence ministers and Government: frustrating as they don't seem to care.

Some participants finished these discussions early, so went on to identify both enablers and blockers to the strategy's objectives being met.

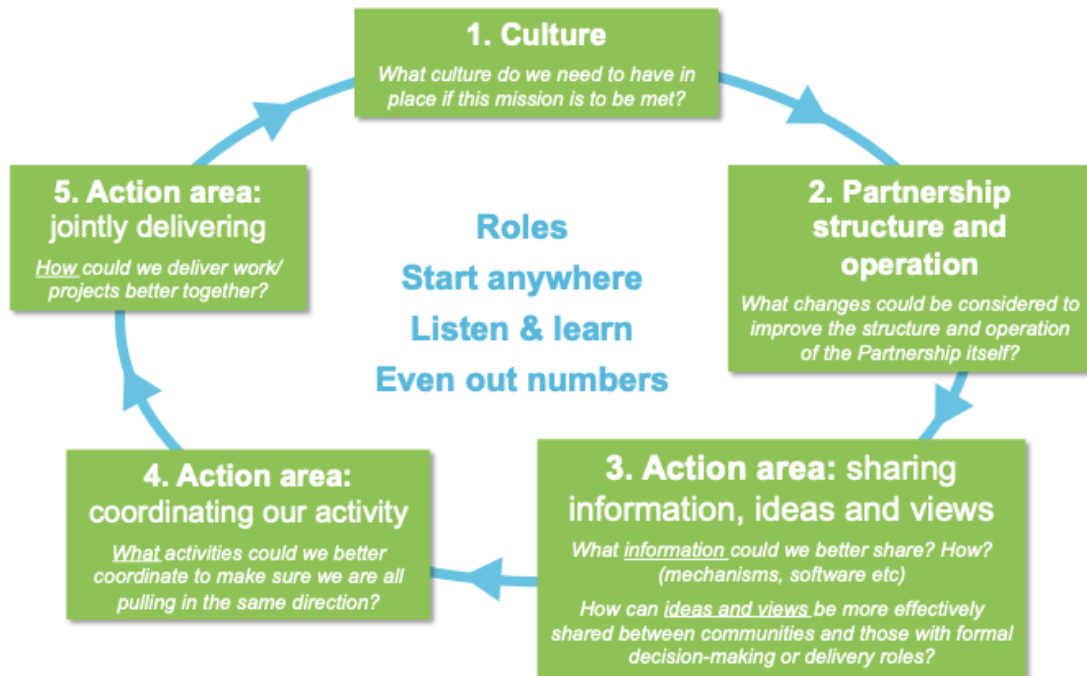
Enablers to achieving these objectives were identified by some tables:

- Funding.
- Different organisational objectives.
- Synchronising of partner programmes.
- Communication between community groups.
- Project managers to drive things forwards.

Blockers were also identified by a few tables that finished their other discussions early:

- Funding, either the absence of it, or the restrictions that come with it e.g. NFM focus.
- Community fatigue.
- Lack of accountability.
- Timing.
- Bureaucracy.
- Investment programmes not being aligned.

Participants were then asked to contribute to five topics of discussion, situated at workstations around the room. The topics are illustrated below. Participants chose where they started, then spent 15-20 minutes discussing each topic so that everybody contributed to all the topics.



The summary of each of these discussions makes up the next five sections of the report.

5. Culture

What culture do we need to have in place if this mission is to be met?

How people want it to feel. For the Partnership to be refreshed, positive and more inclusive. The phrases people used to describe how they want people to act (which will impact on how it feels) were: to have more of an open and curious mindset; to be honest; to collaborate; build trust; be inclusive and better manage the tensions which will therefore generate more creative thinking. Members want it to feel permissible to challenge and to try new things, so they can collectively learn.

A fair process. People want to feel heard and for there to be a clear explanation if issues are not carried forward. It was suggested more empowerment at a local level would be a useful focus and for those who have been impacted most to have a voice. It was expressed that the community is at the centre of the process and there is a danger that they do not speak as they do not feel they are listened to.

Decision making and responsibility. Are the right people in the room at the right time and do they have the freedom and ownership to act? People identified that there is a requirement for partners with an appropriate level of authority to now make difficult decisions against clear criteria that identify how these decisions have been reached. There is a need for partners to be held to account for these decisions. Reporting these decisions back in a strategic (rather than project based) fashion was also identified as being an important part of the decision making process.

Action. Partners identified the need to have movement and pace, for the focus to now be on outcomes not process as they believe it is taking too long to get things done. Accountability was also mentioned a number of times; to hold each other to account, to try new things, for people to be clear, confident and committed enough to take action.

Learning. People talked about the need to admit and learn from mistakes and for that to be acceptable. For example, gathering and defining what has been learnt from action in specific locations in Cumbria, that could be applied elsewhere. A number of people also questioned whether the Partnership learns enough from those people who have been impacted most. It was pointed out that the scale of the issue in Cumbria is not experienced elsewhere in the country.

Measurement. A number of people suggested that measurement of the Partnership needs more consideration: How will we know if it is working? How can we measure it? This was in connection with the culture and Partnership achievements, and how success will be communicated to the wider community.

6. Structure and Operation of the CSFP

What changes could be considered to improve the structure and operation of the Partnership itself?

Overall there was a feeling that participants did not understand enough about the detailed functions and purpose of the CFSP to be able to give definitive guidance on the structure and operational set up required. This was similar amongst those with greater or less experience of CSFP. Those who had attended meetings felt they were too inconclusive and amorphous, with shifting attendance; and there was a widespread feeling that having over 50 people trying to make decisions and drive matters forward was unrealistic.

Status and funding. There was widespread agreement that the CSFP needed to be a funded body. Much interest was also expressed in it having the ability to distribute funds to identified projects. It was acknowledged that this would mean a change to become a formally constituted body and require some resource to set up and run, but an advantage was anticipated, particularly for community groups to be able to access funds for local projects under the wing of CSFP in an accessible and practical manner. Some felt that going a step further to support CSFP to gain the status to act as an 'authority' with delegated powers would be worth consideration.

Communication systems. These need to be developed for streamlined dissemination of information, particularly for community volunteers who have limited capacity for engagement but need to be kept up to date. A practical suggestion was for community flood groups to be allocated a single contact from one of the statutory agencies. This single contact could act as a conduit for information on behalf of CFSP, and provide support for communities navigating the various public bodies with responsibility for different aspects of flooding.

Sub-groups. The role and nature of sub-groups was much discussed, with an overall feeling that they were a positive and practical idea given the size of the Partnership. A combination of geography and specialist subject (e.g. technical aspects, permitting etc.) was generally considered desirable, with a core group designated to make executive decisions. The size of the overall Partnership was generally considered positively. A particular point was made that the direct involvement of community representatives was positive aspect of the CSFP, which participants with experience of similar structures in other areas found to be a welcome change. There was support for the idea of a 'welcome pack' in advance for members attending CSFP meetings for the first time.

CSFP role and interfaces. The role of the CSFP in relation to other bodies needs to be clarified e.g. how technical and geographical sub-groups might link in with catchment management partnerships locally. It was felt essential for CSFP to have a higher profile at national and regional levels, both to ensure Cumbria's special features, experience and requirements are given proper recognition, and to maintain dialogues on current and potential opportunities and constraints. Regional links were discussed particularly in relation to the RFCC.

Action, transparency and accountability. Of underlying importance to all discussions about structure and operation was a focus on action, transparency and accountability.

7. Action area: sharing information, views and ideas

What information could we better share? How? (Mechanisms, software etc)

How can ideas and views be more effectively shared between communities and those with formal decision-making or delivery roles?

Flow of information, possibly via a funded post. There is a strong feeling that coordination and communication of information is key. It is worth specifically funding, as a paid position, to enable wider success of the Partnership, in particular the ability to target different audiences with information relevant to them. A specific example cited by both community and statutory representatives was the circulation of agreed 'key points' after a Board meeting, to give clarity to what can and can't be openly circulated, and to ease the flow of information.

The Flood Hub website. This is generally thought of as a good resource by organisations, but less so by the community who find it more difficult to navigate and not specific to Cumbria.

CSFP website. The existing CSFP website is considered to have great potential, but is currently under-used. It is Cumbria-focused and a source of diverse information at a central point, but is criticised for being out-of-date, lacking links to social media (with associated ability to trigger engagement through direct notifications), and not directly linking to outputs from Board meetings such as key messages and actions. New technologies such as Google shared documents, WhatsApp groups and chat forums have potential and could be linked, although statutory bodies highlighted that these systems can feel challenging to implement in a large organisation with relatively inflexible IT systems. An improved website would also include notifications of available funding, results of research, case studies, and information about members of the Partnership: contact details, key roles and skills audits.

CSFP brand. Some partners saw the CSFP as a brand that was often trusted more than the individual organisations, even if the individual organisations then distributed the information the CSFP produced. Some felt that the CSFP was potentially missing an opportunity by not having a more prominent presence in its own right, drawing more on the trust in the brand.

Acting as a conduit. Local Flood Group Reps and other partners (e.g. NFU) are very willing to be conduits for information and consider it an important part of their role. They would welcome direct communication from organisations that they could then feed out to the wider community, including those without access to electronic means of communication. There is therefore a requirement for a centralised, GDPR-compliant, list of contacts who can be notified with relevant developments – potentially via Google shared documents or a revamped CSFP website.

Pleas. Community representatives made a plea for plain English language to be used in communications and websites. Equally, there was a desire by organisations for a wider appreciation of how constraints on funding and permissions can affect programmes of work.

8. Action area: coordinating activity

What activities could we better coordinate to make sure we are all pulling in the same direction?

Seeing the overall picture. Participants raised the need for better capturing, recording and reporting of everything that is happening across Cumbria, and not just for flood-related projects. There are for example numerous activities taking place on agricultural land throughout the county, and the existing examples and benefits are not all currently being fed in. With the move towards a greater focus on natural flood management (NFM) alongside hard engineering solutions, participants felt that there needs to be a better understanding of everything that is going on and how these all fit together.

Role and remit of CSFP. Some felt the CSFP needs to be clear that it is not trying to achieve things that are already being carried out, particularly by the organisations that have statutory duties and responsibilities relating to flood risk. It was, however, acknowledged that there could be better collaboration and information sharing between these bodies, and it was suggested that there is an opportunity for the CSFP to become the engine of change in driving the bigger picture and making investment work better by focusing on achieving more joined-up thinking for capital investment programmes, project planning and delivery across the key agencies/organisations. It was also suggested that the conflict between regulatory drivers (e.g. security of supply vs. managing flood risk) means that there is a need for better coordination of all aspects of water management.

Better liaison. Participants also felt that there could be better engagement between parties who may have information that would be valuable to each other e.g. stronger links between response and recovery teams, the LRFs and other groups would help to ensure that efforts are not being duplicated but would also help to identify gaps.

Gaps: vulnerable people and communities. Concerns were expressed about gaps in provision, for example for vulnerable and isolated people/communities. It was suggested that better coordination with GPs, community nursing teams and Integrated Care Communities would lead to better identification of those who are most at risk. Concerns were also raised about the feeling that too much is being passed back to communities to deal with it themselves, but not all communities are capable of this.

Communication and information sharing. It was felt that the Flood Hub website could be better utilised, and that the CSFP could play a role in looking at what is needed from a publicly accessible website. It was also felt that information is not being shared/communicated and that some is being ignored or lost, and that better provision of information would build confidence in communities that more is being done than they currently perceive. There were several suggestions for improved spatial presentations of everything that is happening across the county, but it was also acknowledged that this is difficult to achieve. From a community perspective it was, however, suggested that it is less about provision of information and more about finding out how other people are getting things done to help communities develop their own toolbox.

Funding and human resources. There were consistent concerns that a lack of funding and human resources are key constraints on the CSFP achieving its vision, as well as for the catchment management partnerships and smaller local groups. Funding restrictions often mean money cannot be spent on the things that will make the biggest difference. There were several calls for funding to be made available for project managers/coordinators who can focus on identifying funding opportunities, engaging with the agencies and finding out more about all of the little things that are happening that could make a difference.

9. Action area: jointly delivering

How could we deliver work/projects better together?

Understanding the risk profile. Participants suggested we need to understand the overall risk profile for Cumbria better, ensuring we reduce flood risk in areas that most require it first. We should be prioritising locations with earliest onset.

Whole catchment approach, source to sea. We should make sure we are tackling issues as a whole catchment, with a source-to-sea approach. At the moment the perception from some is that the CSFP is picking projects in silo locations and a lack of a strategic approach is leading to an increased flood risk elsewhere in catchments.

Set clear and transparent priorities. Discussions highlighted the lack of clarity about the hierarchy between people, the economy and the environment: this needed to be clarified. Some of the group representatives felt that environmental benefits are synonymous with flood risk benefits, however others felt that the environment has been given too much emphasis. There was some critique surrounding the catchment management groups having environmental betterment as their primary aim. It was considered by some that the catchment management groups should consider protecting people from flooding as their primary aim.

Spatial planning. The group should be influencing spatial planning in a way that orchestrates the ability to make space for water in Cumbria. It was considered that the groups should have representation from planning authorities and possibly that private developers should be represented. It was considered there is a good opportunity to influence some of planned strategic development sites in Cumbria. This would have wider benefits for other partners.

Legislation, policy, procedures and processes. The group should be clearly influencing these topics where they can improve flood risk reduction. Procedures and processes need to be made more transparent enabling grass roots community led schemes to draw on funding and deliver improvements themselves.

Governance. Participants felt the CSFP needs to develop and inform a framework for local flood risk governance. Partners could work to devolve the power from Risk Management Authorities to allow for more community-led initiatives.

Using wider networks. The group needs to use wider networks effectively especially the Farmers Network and other key landowners in the county. The CSFP need to support networks driven by the LEP, and influence things that incentivise landowners like agricultural payments, and to provide guidance to advisory bodies and support networks.

Transparency of capital programmes. Participants suggested that a lack of transparency with capital programmes was limiting opportunities to undertake effective catchment management.

10. Offers of help

What help might you or your colleagues be able to offer?

Participants discussed this question at tables, and their contributions are summarised below.

Offers made. Various specific offers of help were made, including:

- a. Highways England – offered a representative to attend CSFP meetings. Also offered engagement with Catchment Management Groups/Trusts to enable HE to develop forward environment programme. Offered to continue to engage on specific projects.
- b. Highways England commitment to move forward on data sharing task and finish group.
- c. Steven O’Keeffe (Carlisle City Council) and Andrew Slattery (Cumbria Police) offered to work on link with Local Resilience Forum.
- d. Steven O’Keeffe (Carlisle City Council) offered to work on engaging with local elected members.
- e. John Kelsall offered to help communities be represented on any sub groups and link to technical expertise.
- f. Various offers from unnamed participants to review and suggest comments on the draft strategy in a timely manner.
- g. Kate Luxton (Environment Agency) offered to continue to provide support, in particular to the technical sub-groups in terms of policy, procedure and legislative changes.
- h. Paul Makepeace (Avanti) & Laura Normansell offered to attend meetings as appropriate and provide contacts in other relevant organisations, e.g. network rail, the rail delivery group & direct rail services (freight) and operators, e.g. Northern. They also agreed to review the ‘rail loss 2 pager’ document, although it was also suggested that Richard Denyer is probably the main reviewer.
- i. Mark Hesketh (Natural England) offered to maintain engagement with the group, help to work on streamlining in terms of remit with other organisations, help to provide a strategic review of pipeline information to speed up consultation process in terms of legislation, and potentially agree a set of principles up front for dealing with projects.
- j. Peter Miles (Environment Agency) noted the EA is already involved in the STG and he offered support from existing communications groups with the Partnership’s wider engagement and for example getting the MPs and others on board.
- k. A CCC councillor offered that CCC can publish Partnership press releases on its website.
- l. Paul Barnes suggested that subject matter experts were needed to inform strategy, for example with better understanding water management from a farming perspective. He would be happy to take the lead.
- m. Chamber of Commerce offered to comment and circulate the draft strategy around members.

Suggestions. In addition to offers of help made by those able to give it, participants also suggested help that they believed the Partnership should request, including:

- Help from universities to provide input and evidence e.g. observing water courses, photographic evidence etc.
- Sharing best practice and learning with others.
- Political lobbying: helping communities understand how best they can lobby and pressure their MP's to take action.
- Spreading the message: using local communication mechanisms such as social media, Facebook, newspapers, etc.
- Sharing the criteria that determine the priorities of different organisations and funding categories.
- Sharing organisations' programmes – Highways England and CCC.
- The partnership should attend the right transport forums to get the dialogue going.
- Suggested action on all present and members of the Partnership: look at what meetings are on the calendar and add five minutes onto the agenda to talk about what's happening.
- Partner review of the strategy and resource allocation: United Utilities have people who can help [*sic*].
- Ask Defra for more information required about Natural Capital.
- Sharing update about flooding hotspots, and how flooding is defined.

Questions. Some participants found it difficult to be able to offer help or even discuss this possibility without knowing what would be in the strategy, when it would be available, what help was needed, and when it would start delivering action.

11. Wider engagement

What suggestions do you have for wider engagement to motivate practical action and advocacy?



Participants discussed this question at tables in light of the timeline provided above, and their contributions are summarised below.

Who. Various suggestions were made for specific groups or people that the CSFP should engage with around the strategy, including:

- Friends of the Lake District.
- MMO.
- Crown Estates.
- National Health Service.
- National Trust.
- Solway Firth Partnership.
- MoD.
- Stagecoach.
- Stobart.
- Cumbria Woodlands.
- Catchment Partnerships.
- EA catchment co-ordinators and their contacts.
- Land managers (although it was noted this may need a task and finish group).
- FLAGS: could offer a presentation from CSFP, including information on why their community floods. Use the local people in their area to help spread the message.
- Post-CAP working group hosted by LDNPA.

- Local Enterprise Partnership as they are concerned with rural strategies for the future. Farmer Network: few resources but can provide action on the ground.
- National Farmer's Union: can access local levy and provide views on the strategy.
- AONBs like North Pennines and Silverdale, influencing subsidiary organisations.
- Network Rail, noting that Tebay and Carlisle are areas that could be impacted by flood/landslips.
- Appleby Flood Response Group: they are planning to hold a multi-agency flooding exercise during July/August 2020, and could expand it to include flood prevention as well as response.

How. Various suggestions were made as to how the CSFP could engage, including:

- Local Authorities could post messages on their websites if the Board develops key comms messages.
- Make sure all community groups are represented: noting some areas are not represented by community groups.
- Host direct public engagement events for the public (especially those not necessarily represented by other groups) to learn about the work of the CSFP – could be similar to EA drop in sessions.
- Share information with other groups outside of Cumbria, as this is a national problem.
- Sharing good and bad lessons learned from how big schemes have worked out.
- CSFP Website to be updated with easier ways to navigate, more creative input, links between different sites and more informative information, not just opinions.
- Website needs to really work (flood hub or similar), with a strong identity and clear messages, with traffic driven to it and good content.
- Ask Chamber of Commerce to publicise the CSFP via its e-news to its 8k members.
- Ask Allerdale and Copeland councils, as they will have gone through a similar process with the Coastal Erosion strategy.
- Focus on communicating action on social media feeds and websites: this is what people want to see.
- Translate Section 19 report into local action/information.
- Develop an engagement strategy.
- Maximise public interest over 2020 when various flood schemes due to be completed in Cumbria.
- Develop a clearer idea of timescales/questions that people could then take and discuss at other meetings that they are going to.
- The question of how to engage will be helped by knowing how the tension between community/geography and technical expertise will be steered/managed.

Questions. As well as the specific suggestions made above, there were some questions raised that weren't necessarily answered during the table discussions.

- How has the timeline been derived?
- How does this CSFP strategy fit with the coastal strategy?
- How can we engage people if we don't know what to engage them on?
- Will the draft strategy be circulated for comment before the Board on 10 March or just provided on 10 March?

Challenges to the timeline. Several challenges were made to the timeline itself and elements within it:

- Wider engagement is needed earlier than currently planned: perhaps between March and May events. This was highlighted by several tables in the room.
- The absence of a consultation period in the timeline implies there won't be any: worth clarifying.
- The timeline for production of the strategy seems extremely long: does this mean it is too complicated? It might be better to have less objectives if it means things get done more quickly.
- It feels like things are going round in circles: everything needs to move faster.
- With lack of certainty around funding, it is difficult to plan strategy.

12. Heading in right direction?

Before the conclusion of the meeting, independent facilitator Rhuari Bennett asked everyone *'Do you think the Partnership is heading in the right direction?'* in relation to the strategy development process discussed today. To provide a clear picture of how people felt, answers were grouped within:

- a. Yes, broadly speaking the Partnership is heading in the right direction.
- b. Don't know.
- c. No, this isn't the right direction to head in.

Most participants agreed 'yes' (answer option 'a' above). Eight people indicated 'don't know' and there was no one who said 'no'. Of those who said they didn't know, the reasons provided included:

- Concern that old discussions were being re-run.
- Accommodating the breadth of views could challenge the possibility of developing a coherent strategy.
- Lack of assurance that protection of people would be considered ahead of environment.
- Potential lack of action to deliver the strategy, especially due to lack of funding.
- A return to reaction-based response if another incident occurs before the strategy is delivered.

13. Advice for the Partnership

Participants were asked for their **'final advice to the Strategy Task Group'** as they take today's contributions away and draft a strategy. These included:

- Prioritise ruthlessly.
- Secure credibility.
- Be decisive, be careful that it is manageable and leads to results.
- Keep it clear and concise and action-focussed.
- Focus on actions rather than words.
- Have a hierarchical structure.
- Be clear and transparent about the purpose of the partnership.
- Involve community groups and be clear about what you are involving them in.
- Need linkages between mission and strategic actions.
- Protection of people and community first.
- Stitch in time saves nine.
- Have measures of success.
- Pick the easy wins – acknowledging existing projects. [But note next point...]
- Avoid low hanging fruit and quick wins to avoid complacency.
- Be ambitious.
- Definitions are words and key words are taken in different ways – strategy needs to be clear about what is meant by particular words.
- Find funding.
- Look at wider catchment plans.

14. Closing remarks by independent chair Richard Denyer

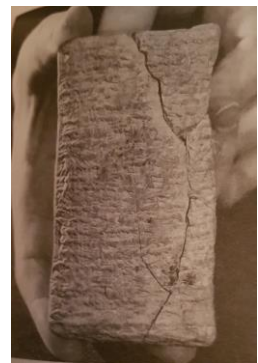
I look forward to going through the record of your ideas and comments. I am confident they will provide a firm basis for the sort of analysis and synthesis needed to enable us in the Strategy Task Group to start on a first draft of an interim strategy.

I am also keen to see and explore any offers or suggestions in any possible area of activity way beyond strategy and planning. Without some modest inputs of financial or human resources the pace of progress will be too slow to keep up the momentum.

To return to my earlier point about the potential value of putting our Cumbrian aspirations and ambitions in a wider context, I have two final images for you. The first slide is of a flood protection scheme installed between Chengdu in Western China and the north Sichuan mountains. This is the splendid Du Jiang Yan that has not only protected the area from all but the very worst floods in the last 2300 years, but has throughout that time also provided irrigation for 5300 sq km of the adjacent plain that is 80% of the area of Cumbria, or bigger than Cumbria outside LDNP. And as it lies near a fault line, the infrastructure also has had to cope with repair after earthquakes too. Remember it was built almost 500 years before Hadrian's Wall.



The last image moves from infrastructure technology to communications technology, and goes back a further 2000 years. This is a Sumerian clay tablet that has only recently been deciphered. These tablets were sent by runners from one community to another around Babylon and Ur in the river basins of the Tigris and Euphrates, and amongst other things were used to exchange information on floods. Public officials were involved too. Intriguingly the words read very much like text messages or emails - even down to a touch of humour and complaint, and the tablets themselves are similar in scale to mobile phones!



So we come back to CSFPs central objectives of mutual help and exchange of information, with communities at the heart. In that spirit, I want to thank you all for your important contributions today, and to hope that you might also have found at least a few new ideas or perspectives to help reinforce your commitment to collaboration in our joint and several efforts to protect and where possible improve Cumbrian lives & livelihoods. For me, it is a privilege to be able to work alongside such inspirational people who are so ready to forgo the alternative pre Christmas delights that I am sure were on offer today. I want to pay a special tribute to my CSFP colleagues on the Strategy Task Group – Carolyn, John, Stewart, Doug, Anthony & Kate - and to Rhuari, Jenny and the team of facilitators and notetakers. It has been an exciting joint exercise, with many a frank exchange of views but a totally constructive ethos throughout, and I like to feel we have made a good team. Before the final curtain falls, let me remind members of

the Board that we have a meeting beginning at 4.30 in this room: we shall despatch the business quickly.

So thank you all again for your excellent contributions today, and for the spirit in which you have provided them. May 2020 see us realise many of our individual and collective ambitions for the better protection of lives and livelihoods in Cumbria, and for the better appreciation of Cumbria's unique problems and achievements. For my part, I undertake to do all I can to assist those processes at national and county-wide levels.

Appendix 1: Attendees

Name	Organisation
Barry Chambers	Allerdale Borough Council
Paul Wood	Allerdale Borough Council
Tim Riley	Associated British Ports
Laura Normansell	Avanti West Coast
Paul Makepeace	Avanti West Coast
Andy Buck	Barrow Borough Council
Steven O'Keeffe	Carlisle City Council
Faith Cole	Community Representative
Janet Chapman	Community Representative
John Kelsall	Community Representative
Paul Barnes	Community Representative
Jackie O'Reilly	Copeland Borough Council
Richard Denyer	CSFP Chair
Julian Whittle	Cumbria Chamber of Commerce
Angela Jones	Cumbria County Council
Anthony Lane	Cumbria County Council
Doug Coyle	Cumbria County Council
Graeme Innes	Cumbria County Council
Helen Renyard	Cumbria County Council
Keith Little	Cumbria County Council
Mike Conefrey	Cumbria County Council
Paul Sewell	Cumbria County Council
Philip Greenup	Cumbria County Council
Carolyn Otley	Cumbria CVS
Jenny Benson	Cumbria Foundation
David Hughes	Cumbria LEP
Andy Slattery	Cumbria LRF
David Harpley	Cumbria Wildlife Trust
Neville Elstone	Cumbria Woodlands
Jane Langston	Eden District Council
Elizabeth Radford	Eden Rivers Trust
Craig Cowperthwaite	Environment Agency
Iwan Lawton	Environment Agency
Jo Ratcliffe	Environment Agency
Kate Luxton	Environment Agency
Liz Davey	Environment Agency
Peter Miles	Environment Agency
Sharon Kennedy	Environment Agency
Simon Johnson	Environment Agency
Stewart Mounsey	Environment Agency
Jonathan Reade	Highways England
Nick Chappell	Lancaster University
Sarah James	Lune Rivers Trust
Mark Hesketh	Natural England
Adam Briggs	NFU
Amanda Wallace	Observer
Caroline Dudgeon	Observer
David Black	Observer
Luis Eckersley	Observer
Lynne Jones	Observer
Richard Milne	Observer
Adrian Lythgo	RFCC
Laura Chamberlain	South Lakeland District Council
Adam Day	The Farmer Network
Andrew Kendall	United Utilities
James Halliday	United Utilities
Katie Duffy	United Utilities
Caitlin Pearson	West Cumbria Rivers Trust
Adrian Shepherd	YDNPA

Appendix 2: Evaluation

Below is a summary of the 45 feedback forms provided by participants.

